

**Date:** July 9, 2013

**To:** Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager  
**Through:** Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager  
**From:** Mark D. Ahrendsen, Transportation Director  
**Subject:** Agreement between the City of Durham and Duke University for the Bull City Connector

### **Executive Summary**

The City of Durham and Duke University executed a two year agreement effective August 1, 2010 for the provision of fare free public transportation service known as the Bull City Connector (BCC). A new agreement extended the provision of the BCC service for an additional year effective August 1, 2012. The purpose of the BCC is to link employment, education, entertainment/retail and residential activities along the corridor between Duke University/Hospital and Goldenbelt (via the 9<sup>th</sup> Street area and Downtown Durham).

The service is provided Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm every 15 minutes and every 20 minutes from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm Monday through Thursday, 6:00 pm to midnight on Friday and 8:00 am to midnight on Saturday. The BCC currently serves approximately 2,000 trips per day.

The City and Duke University are desirous of continuing the operation of the BCC. Accordingly, a new Agreement between the City of Durham and Duke University for the Bull City Connector has been prepared. The agreement is for one year effective August 1, 2013 and provides for a continued \$350,000 contribution from Duke University.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that City Council authorize the City Manager to execute an agreement between the City of Durham and Duke University for the Bull City Connector.

### **Background**

The City of Durham and Duke University executed a two year agreement effective August 1, 2010 for the provision of fare free public transportation service know as the Bully City Connector (BCC). A new agreement extended the provision of the BCC service for an additional year effective August 1, 2012. The purpose of the BCC is to link employment, education, entertainment/retail and residential activities along the corridor between Duke University/Hospital and Goldenbelt (via 9<sup>th</sup> Street area and Downtown Durham).

The service is provided Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm every 15 minutes and every 20 minutes from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm Monday through Thursday, 6:00 pm to midnight on Friday and 8:00 am to midnight on Saturday. Ridership has grown steadily and the BCC currently serves approximately 2,000 trips per day.

Duke University contributed \$375,000 for the purpose of providing the required local share of a Federal Transit Administration capital grant for the purchase of five hybrid buses to be used on the BCC. These new buses were placed into service in April 2012.

The projected budget to operate the BCC for the first two years was \$2,187,203. Funding for the BCC included a Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) Grant in the amount of \$544,816 and \$650,000 from Duke University (\$300,000 first year, \$350,000 second year). The balance of the operating budget for the first two years of service, \$992,387, was provided by the City of Durham with revenue from its \$5 vehicle registration fee. The projected budget for the third year of service was \$1,150,000 and included \$800,000 in funding from a CMAQ grant and a \$350,000 contribution from Duke University.

### **Issues and Analysis**

The BCC was designed as a fast, frequent, fare free service available to all Durham residents, employees and visitors who might have the need or desire to travel within the urban corridor along Main Street and Erwin Road between Goldenbelt and Duke University/Hospital. Ridership has grown steadily and has reached the initial goal of 2,000 boardings per day. The major boarding locations are Duke University Hospital and Durham Station/Five Points. There are also significant boardings at 9<sup>th</sup> Street, East Main Street and Goldenbelt. With little recovery time in the schedule, the BCC has experienced on-time performance challenges at certain times of the day. Several measures have been implemented to improve on-time performance including enforcement of lane obstructions by commercial vehicles, route adjustments and signal priority equipment but schedule reliability continues to be a problem.

To improve schedule reliability the round trip running time for the BCC route will be increased from 45 minutes to 60 minutes during the day and from 40 minutes to 50 minutes after 6 pm and on Saturdays resulting in a day time service frequency of 20 minutes and an evening and Saturday service frequency of 25 minutes. The BCC has been operating on this schedule since the May 13 closure of Main Street for the bridge replacement project with an on time performance of over 90%.

Duke will provide \$350,000 for the BCC for the period August 1, 2013 through July 31, 2014 with the balance of the operating budget for the BCC for this time period provided by the City.

### **Alternatives**

1. Authorize the City Manager to execute an Agreement with Duke University for the BCC. Duke University would provide \$350,000 toward the operation of the BCC.
2. Do not authorize the City Manager to execute an Agreement with Duke University for the BCC. The City would need to provide an additional \$350,000 to continue the BCC.
3. Do not authorize the City Manager to execute an Agreement with Duke University and discontinue the BCC.

### **Financial Impact**

The projected budget for the fourth year of operation of the BCC is \$1,150,000. Duke University will provide \$350,000 to the City for the third year of operation of the BCC. The balance of the funding for the third year of operation of the BCC will be provided by the City as part of the FY2013-14 transit budget.

**SDBE Summary**

The City's transit program is a federally funded program. SDBE participation is not an issue that is associated with the recommended action.

**Attachments**

Attachment 1 – Agreement between the City of Durham and Duke University

Attachment 2 – Map of the Bull City Connector